tribution of land among the peasants, and other economic measures. Indeed, it was not a statement of national policy but, rather, an agreement on certain points of immediate concern to both parties. Strangely enough, this lopsided document became the only declaration of the intentions of the Provisional Government.

The Soviet published an appeal to the soldiers and the people (agreed upon in advance with the government) stressing the democratic character of the government's program and promising to support the Cabinet "so far as it executes its commitments and fights against the old regime." A government so formed could not pretend to be legitimate in any sense of the word. Its only basis was the agreement between the Duma Committee and the Soviet.

## PUZZLES OF SOVIET POLICY

The Petrograd Soviet was the center of the revolutionary storm. It had invested the Provisional Government with power and determined its platform. However, its own position on the question of power—the cardinal question of any revolution—was as puzzling as its own political program. After its abortive attempt to saddle the country with a new Tsar, the Duma Committee was thoroughly discredited in the eyes of the overwhelming majority of the people. All strength lay in the hands of the groups gravitating to the Soviet. But the Soviet's leaders were reluctant to accept even partial responsibility for the government, and preferred to establish a Cabinet consisting of elements foreign to them and even hostile to the revolution, reserving for themselves the role of vigilant watchdogs.

In retrospect, I think they chose the wrong road. A strong and stable government could have been formed after the March revolution only on the basis of co-operation between the revolutionary, democratic forces represented by the Soviet and the progressive elements of the Duma—that is, on the basis of a political coalition of the left. Did the leaders of the Soviet fear that, once in the government, they would be under overwhelming pressure of the masses and compelled to go further than the circumstances—primarily the war inherited from the old regime—would permit? Or was their decision determined by psychological factors? The second seems more likely. Most of the Soviet leaders had come up in underground work against the Tsarist regime and were accustomed to look upon government, courts, coercion, police, and other attributes of authority as evils. They had no will to power and found it difficult to visualize themselves in the role of ministers.

I did not realize then how grave a mistake the Soviet leaders had